F Schmeltzer 7/2/85

PRESS GUIDANCE RELEASABLE

(11)

Q. Would the sale of the F-15 to Saudi Arabia constitute an introduction of an advanced weapons system into an area where it doesn't exist?

A. No. The F-15 is already operational in Israel and Iran and its rough Soviet equivolent, the MIG 23, has been delivered to Iraq.

(Background: there are two basic versions of the MIG 23: ground support and all-weather fighter. Syria has the former, Iraq has both)

Q. What is our commitment to Saudi Arabia on this sale based on?

A. Our commitment to sell the F-15 to Saudi Arabia is based on but goes beyond our long term relationship with Saudi Arabia and our commitment to its legitimate defense needs. In 1974 a DOD survey identified the need for a replacement aircraft for the aging British Lightening. In the same year the previous administration agreed in principle to the sale of a replacement aircraft. After giving full consideration to the various types of aircraft available the Saudis chose the F-15. This Administration has reviewed that commitment in light of Saudi needs and our arms transfer policy and has decided to honor that commitment. The Saudis have been informed of this decision. Therefore, the commitment to seek Congressional approval for the sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia is based on careful study of their defense needs and our policies on arms transfers, and is not simply an outgrow of our long established

relationship or practice.

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